



GOVERNOR'S GRIZZLY BEAR ADVISORY COUNCIL

fwp.mt.gov/gbac

Working Groups Consolidated Skeletal Framework Draft

By the end of the March 19th and 20th, 2020, Grizzly Bear Advisory Council meeting, Council members indicated they were ready for their working group documents to be integrated. Council members created a writing team representing each of the 4 working groups. The writing team consists of Darrin Boss, Jonathan Bowler, Caroline Byrd, Michele Dietrich, and Erin Edge. Montana FWP Support Team member, Rich Harris, supports this writing team upon their request.

This drafted working document reflects all 4 working groups. This document captures where the overall Council is in their brainstorming discussion at this time. This draft does not reflect consensus. It is a work in progress.

Next steps for the Council will be to review this consolidated document, clarify existing statements, identify gaps, add additional ideas, and continue discussion around ideas where varying thoughts remain.

Montana Grizzly Bear Advisory Council

Preamble

Frames context, need, and charge for the Council's work.

1. The grizzly bear is our state animal and important to Montana's heritage
2. Most Montanans recognize that grizzly bears are an important part of what makes Montana the "Last Best Place" and Do we need this here? What does the Council say?
3. Montana is unique because we have the opportunity to create a connected grizzly bear population
4. Montana is unique in its conservation in the contiguous US.
5. Recognize conservation of bears
6. Humans and bears have shared the landscape for thousands of years.
7. Recognize the work that has gone into that relationship and the continued effort towards coexistence with grizzly bears
8. Recognize the diversity of cultural perceptions of grizzly bears (include tribal acknowledgement)
9. These are the guiding principles that guide the counsel recommendations.
 - a. Maintain and enhance human safety
 - b. Ensure a healthy and sustainable grizzly bear population
 - c. Improve timely and effective response to conflicts involving grizzly bears
 - d. Engage all partners in grizzly related outreach and conflict prevention
 - e. Improve intergovernmental, interagency, and tribal coordination

Vision

Articulates desired future state of Montana's relationship with the grizzly bear. (Should use FUTURE TENSE)

10. Recognize the value that grizzly bears bring to the state (tourism, wild nature, ecosystems)
11. Montana has the opportunity to take the lead in conservation of endangered species like the grizzly bear.
12. Statement addressing where we want bears and why
13. Populations of grizzly bears within the federally identified recovery zones are managed by Montana to prevent their reclassification as "threatened" or "endangered" under the ESA. Should vision and recommendations be more generic to either situation (listed or not)?
14. Education, outreach and conflict response should be available in all areas where humans and grizzlies share the landscape

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15. Grizzly bear/human interactions should be understood from both biological and social science perspectives
16. Maintaining secure, remote areas where bears can roam away from populations is essential for the long-term conservation of bears.
17. We envision well-supported and well-funded management, research, and monitoring of grizzly bears. State and federal agencies should support and continue to implement research to promote the long-term conservation of grizzly bears and be at the forefront of providing the best available science.
18. Montana's grizzly bear populations—Yellowstone, Northern Continental Divide, Cabinet-Yaak, Selkirks, and eventually the Bitterroot should be thriving, self-sustaining, and interconnected.
19. We support cooperation and continued conservation efforts between state and federal agencies, the public, NGOs, tribal entities, grass roots organizations, and local governments.
20. Facilitate natural movement among recovery zones,
21. We support decision making based on the best available science and current laws
22. Improve outreach and education
23. Establish new funding mechanisms for wildlife conservation and management in MT

Recommendations

Provides clear, discreet recommendations (and a way to capture input that doesn't represent a consensus recommendation) based on the direction provided by the Executive Order topics, FWP questions, public input, existing research/publications, and Council discussion.

Grizzly Bear Distribution

24. MTFWP in consultation with relevant agencies and the public should develop a statewide management plan for grizzly bear conservation and management. The plan should address:
 - a. Biologically suitable and socially acceptable habitat
 - b. Biologically suitable has been defined in recovery zones, the whole state could possibly be "biologically suitable"
 - c. Social tolerance is subjective
 - d. Connectivity should be accounted for in biologically suitable
 - e. incorporates open space, connectivity and linkage zones
 - f. Incorporate assessment of human activities and impacts in conservation areas
 - g. Identify acceptable range and linkage zones
 - h. address unique challenges.
 - i. considers the entire state as a connected habitat
25. Grizzly bears should be managed to meet the recovery population goals within the existing recovery areas

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26. Provide opportunities to move between these areas in connectivity zones (Areas 1-3¹)
27. Encourage habitat restoration and enhancement on public and private lands
28. Allow natural movement including to new areas, protect habitat, protect local communities
29. Create re-location/occupation areas in Montana
30. Grizzly bear populations should not be augmented by moving bears to previously unoccupied areas.
31. Group 2 worked to respond to the questions from FWP related to the critical topics identified by the Governor's executive order. To conceptualize the ideas of distribution, we defined and discussed 4 zones of grizzly bear range and their associated management.
 - a. Area 1 - Area surrounding Recovery Zones in the NCDE and GYE with strong populations
 - b. Area 2 - Area surrounding Recovery Zones in C-Y and Bitterroot Selway lacking strong populations
 - c. Area 3 - Connectivity zone between Areas 1-2 spanning a mix of private and public land
 - d. Area 4 - Lands outside of Areas 1-3 which do not provide connection to established Recovery Zones
32. Bears should be managed within and between the four designated recovery ecosystems within Montana. Manage for habitat and population growth in Area 1, manage for conflict prevention and sustained populations in Areas 2-3, manage for conflict prevention and response in Area 4
33. Plan should include a detailed and comprehensive outreach and education component to address social tolerance and acceptance¹
34. Review and update the 1993 recovery plan (not sure if this belongs or not)
35. The recovery areas (this cannot be done by us) and outside zones of each ecosystem should be removed and Montana should be designated as one grizzly bear habitat keeping in mind that biologically suitable does not mean socially acceptable or appropriate. (this is a council conversation) (We need to discuss the difference between one management plan and one population)
36. Management protocols should include flexibility
37. Encourage habitat restoration and enhancement on public and private lands
38. Encourage and support research and monitoring around food resources, habitat, road densities and other identified research needs related to habitat security, in areas of current and future grizzly bear occupancy.

Connectivity

39. Connectivity is vital to the long term sustainability, persistence, and resiliency of grizzly bears in the lower 48. (Montana has the opportunity to take the lead in conservation of the grizzly bear.)
- a. Strive for occupied habitat between recovery zones
 - b. Protect habitat to allow for natural migration
 - i. Conservation easements
 - ii. No hunting of grizzly bears allowed in connectivity zones
 - iii. Evaluate federal land use planning processes and projects for impact to habitat requirements for natural connectivity with focus on food storage and road management
 - iv. Bears in connectivity zones will not be translocated back to recovery areas (need to develop areas in DMA outside PCA that are tolerable relocation zones)
 - v. Restrict new residential development to allow for wildlife movement near public lands. Clustering with wildlife corridor. Attractant restrictions
40. The likely connectivity zones exist in diverse social and environmental settings - not all of these settings are conducive to permanent habitation, but should be managed to promote genetic connectivity.
41. FWP define connectivity zones within Montana where natural/functional connectivity (i.e. occupancy, ecological function in connective areas) is proactively encouraged through:
- i. Management decisions take connectivity into consideration
 - ii. Increase monitoring of bear movements between recovery zone users to reduce conflicts spatially/temporally real-time and improve communication between locals and agencies
 - iii. Need to develop relocation areas in between recovery zones
 - iv. Improve communication and work with local communities to discuss tolerable relocation areas.
42. Work with MDT and Federal Highways and Trains to reduce transportation mortalities and facilitate movement and enhance public safety
- i. Enhance understanding of priority areas; include wildlife migration corridors into infrastructure improvement plans 2
 - ii. Identify, model and develop potentially important grizzly bear crossing points on major highways and seek funding and planning opportunities to incorporate wildlife crossing practices into the transportation system
 - iii. Protecting and identifying these areas will provide more areas of colonization to relocate bears and encourage natural migration movement

and connectivity between recovery areas. Private lands in between the areas should be considered for conservation easements.

- b. Work with partners on a wildlife transportation safety campaign
- c. Work with appropriate entities to explore ways to minimize train/bear collisions due to grain spills and carcasses near train tracks.
 - 1. Think tanks for solving problems in high mortality situations
 - 2. Suggested reduced speed limits at night
- d. Private lands and identified areas should be included in the conversation and considered for conservation easements
 - i. Protect habitat in connectivity zones
 - 1. Road building restrictions similar to Amendment 19
 - 2. Recommend Wilderness designation for WSAs
 - 3. Honor strict protections of IRAs

Moving Bears

- 43. All agencies should work together to develop a protocol for translocating bears a) between ecosystems, b) within an ecosystem, c) outside of a designated ecosystem, which further the conservation, connection and recovery of grizzly bears in the state of Montana. Bears translocated due to previous conflict may need to be placed deeper into core habitat of a designated ecosystem.
- 44. Previous agreements regarding augmentation and transplanting in recovery zones should continue to be honored
- 45. USFWS, FWP USFS and WS need to work together with local landowners, local watershed groups and county governments to identify new relocation sites outside of the designated management areas, especially in connectivity zones.
- 46. Human assisted movement of bears may be a strategy when needed, for example, to rescue a subpopulation.
- 47. Male bears should be relocated to new areas to promote genetic dispersal (does the one above say the same thing as this?)
- 48. Bears should not be moved back to the population they came from. They should be moved to predesignated sites within Areas 1 and 2 or public land anchors of Area 3 with priority to areas that have not met recovery goals
- 49. Agencies should use habitat research to establish suitable re-location sites in Montana.
- 50. If bears are already in or near unoccupied areas, allow for flexibility and allow moving bears to the nearest remote habitat rather than returned to recovery areas (are these getting at the same message of the need to identify relocation areas in between zones? If so, can these be combined?)
- 51. Decisions related to food conditioned, habituated, or known conflict bears should be given extra consideration and more flexible management opportunities
- 52. Clarification is needed when communicating with the public about Transplant Protocols and the difference between re-locating a bear that moved in on its own vs. reintroduction/augmentation

Conflict Prevention

53. Continue to support, fund and encourage carcass removal programs.
54. Create consistent food storage requirements across state and federal lands and encourage the same standards on private lands.
 - a. reach out to outfitters - MT Board of Outfitters¹
55. Land managers provide bear resistant/conflict reducing infrastructure in areas of potential conflict on public lands
56. There should be a prioritization of conflict prevention regulations that help to prevent conflict within and nearby Areas (see explanation of areas by group 2)
 - a. Statewide regulations for public land use
 - b. Sanitation/waste recommendations for municipalities/private land
 - c. On public lands, phase in regulations with opportunity for public response and “buy in”
 - d. Recommendation that state encourages federal agencies to consolidate bear related information, outreach, and regulations within Montana
 - i. Multi-agency cooperation and consistency
57. Human prevention
 - a. Create an additional conflict prevention grant program, not coupled with the Livestock Loss Board, to address conflicts and losses.
 - b. One idea would be to reassess the Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks Living with Wildlife grant program.
 - c. Work with planning boards to proactively recommend actions to governing bodies on how to minimize bear conflicts
 - d. Public (hunters recreationists, anglers, hikers etc)
 1. Foraging and recreation should be seasonally limited in areas with high grizzly concentrations. Trails and other public areas should be subject to closures when necessary
 - e. Farms and Ranches
 1. MTFWP should put more time and resources into conflict prevention, and should focus on the safety of those people that must work on the landscape raising livestock and crops.
 2. Encourage a consistent messaging system between bear managers, residents and livestock producers. This would also encourage neighborhood watch systems
 3. Encourage livestock conflict prevention measures
 - f. Reduce public and state land conflicts
 1. Encourage carrying accessible bear spray in bear country
 2. New trails should not be constructed in core grizzly habitat
 3. Front country campgrounds, picnic areas, and other areas utilized for vehicle or bicycle camping should have bear resistant food and attractant storage facilities. Bear resistant infrastructure should be

- available at all federal and local campgrounds and other public areas.
- 4. Encourage livestock producers to implement appropriate conflict prevention on public lands
- g. Reduce Hunter Conflicts
 - 1. Increase education of hunting safely in bear country
 - 2. Encourage outfitters to provide bear spray and training to clients
 - 3. Encourage carrying bear spray when hunting
- h. Montana needs to invest in more outreach in all zones across the state.
 - 1. Recommend that outreach is enhanced and that FWP look to prioritize conflict response when creating / funding new positions. Look to cost-share models that currently exist (e.g. Eric Graham, Blackfoot Challenge).
 - 2. Recommend that FWP prioritize cost share/ liaison positions over direct hires in Areas 3 and 4
- i. Continue to support and fully fund necessary bear conservation management personnel so they can continue the outreach and education programs; deal effectively, efficiently and quickly with conflict issues wherever they occur
- j. Establish bear wise community guidelines and protocols. Include an incentive program that encourages Montana communities within bear country to become Bear Wise communities
- k. Encourage governor and Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks to develop a state Bear Aware outreach and education program with a designated bear aware outreach supervisor with the goal to reach all Montanans, tourists, visitors and everyone who enjoys the outdoors, recreates, works and uses the outdoors. Standardize bear spray requirements and protocols to allow everyone to carry bear spray in bear country. (e.g. FedEx, UPS drivers;)
- l. Waste management/sanitation
 - 1. Support the development of local sanitation ordinances that include enforcement.
 - 2. Encourage consistency with sanitation recommendations.
 - 3. Encourage county and local governments to work with local haulers to assess the need to create a bear resistant disposal option and encourage carriers to modify practices to mitigate bear conflicts. Governor and Federal agencies should pursue funding to support this effort
 - 4. Encourage municipal storage orders
 - a. Bear resistant garbage containers
 - b. Waste transfer stations
- m. Support existing carcass removal programs in areas of grizzly bear populations, and implement in areas where necessary and not currently in place
- n. Improve communication and messaging with MT visitors and office of tourism

Commented [1]: discuss bear wise wordsmith

Commented [2R1]: Should we ask FWP what they would prefer us to use and how do they define it.

1. Governor should encourage local communities to embrace bear-wise practices by supporting local grass roots and watershed community groups to work together on becoming bear-wise communities. This should originate in local communities, but state and federal governments can encourage through funding and other support.
- o. Reduce residential conflicts
 - i. Review FWP subdivision recommendations
 - ii. Create attractant restrictions
 - iii. Encourage all communities to be Bear Aware
 - iv. Encourage neighborhood communication networks

Conflict Response and Protocols

58. Standardize and clarify management protocols for severe conflict bears (problem bears) and fully fund this part of the conflict prevention program. Continue to use established protocols for bears that continue to engage in severe conflict situations such as food adaptation, unnatural aggressive behavior.... (find legal language)¹
59. More conservative response in Area 1 and 2 than Area 3 and 4
60. More liberal/flexible management in Areas 3 and 4 to build trust and acceptance within these communities
61. More liberal/flexible management within private lands in Areas 1 and 2 than on public lands in these areas
62. State management protocols should be similar state wide with flexibility case by case, current protocols currently allow for this
 - a. Current protocols allow for instant removal in certain cases
 - b. Decisions should prioritize human safety, livelihoods, and common sense.
 - c. Current protocols allow enough flexibility to adapt to changes in distribution
63. Establish clear guidelines for lethal removal of grizzly bears that are consistent with federal regulations and allow for flexibility. The guidelines should be driven by: 1) geography; 2) demographics; 3) evidence of chronic livestock depredation; and 4) conflict severity Do these last two numbered items say the same thing? Is this one more comprehensive?
64. Provide an adequate number of year-round bear management specialists and technicians:
 - a. Sufficient, year-round and reliable funding would better allow for transfer of expertise from bear-managers to bear managers in training
 - b. Improve response time
 - c. Allow time for relationship building, outreach, and communication with landowners and livestock producers (for example in linkage zones ahead of bear distribution)

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65. Allow landowners to use effective non-lethal methods to haze habituated bears away (For example bear spray cannons that can be used at a distance).
 - a. Research effective methods to deter and haze bears for public and bear managers
 - b. Educate landowners on safety and use of allowable non-lethal methods to haze bears.

A multiplier is a topic of consideration because...(why a multiplier) meeting discussion April 24

66. Research and explore the possible implementation of a multiplier for livestock loss due to grizzly depredation. Multiplier should have limits pertaining to type of operation, geography, participation in conflict prevention, and personal responsibility.

Role of Hunting

67. Hunting should be considered as a management tool using the best available science to determine limited quota hunts.
68. Given complete recovery and monitoring for sustainable populations in each of the 4 recovery ecosystems consideration should be given to Areas 1 and 4
69. There will be no hunting of any grizzly bear population until endangered species protections are removed
70. Any grizzly bear hunt should be managed by MTFWP to ensure and maintain a healthy grizzly bear population.
71. Messaging to the public should establish that hunting will not replace the need for conflict prevention,
72. Slow/Delayed rollout of hunting after delisting.
73. Consideration of geographic area/importance to connectivity.
74. FWP implements depredation hunts when necessary.
75. Strict enforcement of poaching is necessary for the long-term conservation of bears and stringent fines and enforcement should continue regardless of listing. Consider increasing poaching fines.
76. If a hunt is allowed, it should be delayed for a few years after de-listing, should be extremely limited in scope, should not allow hunting near the parks, should not allow hunting in vital linkage habitat, and should be easily suspended or cancelled during high mortality years.
77. USFWS, MTFWP and USDA Wildlife Services should work together to use their expertise, best available science, and experience to establish a hunting season or seasons in Montana that will both maintain and help control the population.

Education

78. Create volunteer education positions similar to hunter education
79. Develop K-12 curriculum guides for teachers to implement grizzly education into learning objectives
 - a. Cross-curriculum activities
 - b. Include the best available science, bear biology, and conflict prevention strategies should be created and implemented
 - c. Include games and activities that appeal to all learning styles.

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80. Expand and improve bear safety information to all outdoor user groups
 - a. Develop a recreating in bear country educational video
 - b. Encourage and educate about the use of bear spray
81. Create a bear education coordinator position within FWP
 - a. Use the best available science, bear biology and conflict prevention strategies to streamline and create a catalog of all education, handouts, etc that exist 3
 - b. Bear-Wise Communities
 - c. Coordinate with tourism, realtors, VRBOs etc
 - d. Fund a FWP grizzly PR person to boost funding for conflict prevention and conservation.
 - e. Address outreach and education needs on public lands with rapidly increasing use
 - f. improve bear safety information and outreach to new residents and visitors.
82. A coexistence and education Summit or Academy should take place regularly so that people can brainstorm and discuss new challenges and ways to address them
 - a. create consistent messaging, reporting, and to share effective strategies
83. Mandatory bear awareness training for recreationists on public and state lands. This could be encouraged by offering incentives like discounts at REI, Cabelas or bear spray etc
84. Hunter Education
 - a. Create a video of bear safety lecture for hunters, anglers, hunters education classes, outfitters, residents and non-residents
 - b. Require an annual online test for residents and non-residents on bear identification and couple this with a bear spray proper use video
85. Require commercial foragers watch a bear safety video and take a bear safety test each year with their licenses like hunters and anglers
86. Look into occupational safety and health safety standards for businesses (outfitters, state employees, recreational tours, etc.) for requiring bear safety standards

Communication among agencies and between agencies and the public

87. Identify gaps in intergovernmental, interagency, and tribal coordination and create an action plan to address the gaps and improve the communication and coordination.
88. FWP needs to better communicate with the public, especially with landowners and livestock producers, when it comes to trapping and relocating grizzlies for any reason.
89. Establish consistent messaging
90. Work with relevant agencies to create a streamlined way for reliable public reporting of possible grizzly bear sightings
91. Establish cooperative monitoring programs on public lands to assess impacts of increased recreation on wildlife into the future.

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92. Establish cooperative monitoring programs – FWP, USFS, Permittees, NGOs on public allotments
93. The state should develop a bear aware/smart tourism and recreation plan that celebrates grizzly bear recovery and addresses conflict zones. Plan should address bear smart and appropriate recreation activities for core habitat and linkage zones.
94. Review interagency MOUs for opportunities to improve efficiency and capacity for conflict response Should this be in conflict response or interagency communication?

Resources:

WHY: (Do we need a section or list of where the funding should go? or should it be included in the pertinent section of the document.)

95. Increase partnership, funding and support for local watershed groups and other organizations to help (for example):
 - a. Support local conflict mitigation efforts
 - b. expand outreach efforts
 - c. Provide salary cost shares with local groups
96. Support rural economies and private lands
97. Consider the implication de-listing may have on future funding.
98. Look for long term funding for the livestock loss board
99. Separate compensation for depredation from funding for conflict response so each can be adequately funded.
100. Support funding for conservation easements

IDEAS FOR GETTING FUNDING

101. Encourage state to pursue any and all options for increased funding opportunities (federal, state and private funding sources)
102. Wyoming Resolution and other tools Wyoming is using to fund wildlife management
103. Salary cost shares
104. Community Grants
105. Establish a dedicated permanent fund including state and national partners for grizzly conservation. This permanent Grizzly Fund would pay for management and preventative measures for human and bear co-existence in the United States. Seed money from federal appropriations would start this fund
106. Establish a permanent fund for non-lethal grizzly conservation that could be seeded with a farm bill appropriation and enhanced with national public contributions.
107. Duck stamp model
108. Resort/gas/tourism/recreation tax and fees
109. AIS prevention pass model
110. Montana recreation license
111. Revive the Living with Wildlife Grant Program

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112. Fees on building permits and real estate sales to preserve open spaces
113. Recreation license with low costs (1-2 dollars) for in-state recreationists (For example this exists for DNRC lands)
114. Review CSKT and Blackfeet conservation permits for ideas
115. Look at the Montana Sage Grouse Initiative and how funding comes through that specific to sage grouse habitat
116. Conservation fee associated with national parks
117. Recovering America's Wildlife Act
118. Farm Bill NRCS
 - a. Support efforts to include in the next farm bill, funding for grizzly conservation/ conflict mitigation efforts.
119. Wildlife Conservation Stamp
120. Establish partnerships with insurance companies for wildlife friendly transportation infrastructure (for example - Colorado)
121. Contribute to bear conflict management funding through a mandatory additional fee added to bear (black or grizzly) hunting license

Other

122. Celebrate Grizzly Day
 - a. Encourage the Governor and the Legislature to designate a day to celebrate grizzly bear conservation, preferably in the spring when bears are waking up
 - b. Bears as part of Montana's heritage to create awareness and remind folks that grizzlies are on the landscape.

Topics that still need to be discussed as the council as a whole.

- Should we include Exec Order guiding principles in Preamble?
- Use of "success" in preamble, needs careful understanding and definition
- what makes Montana unique in its conservation?
- Importance of connecting "our" document to the Executive Order
- How do the "whereas" statements from the executive order constrain or inform our work?
- Where do we want bears and why?
 - Subquestions - within recovery zones, between (connectivity zones), other areas?
 - What is true recovery (metapopulation?)
- What is the continued role of recovery zones?
- Is delisting part of the vision?
- Is connectivity a part of our vision?
- Do we want a meta-population in Montana, in lower 48?
- What is our definition of socially acceptable / tolerant?
- Definitions of "accounting for" and "consider" - what weight are we placing on the actions being discussed?
- Is the whole state "habitat"? Does "habitat" have to be occupied?
- What does defined "habitat" mean for resource allocation?

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- What do we mean by whole state management, single population?
- How do discuss different areas in state - Group 2 as example
- Agreed upon definitions for terms
- use of create v. encourage v. require etc.
- Bear Aware, Bear Smart, Bear Wise terms? What does this mean or look like?
- Loss compensation multiplier
- should we refrain from the use of the word governor since he will change... be more generic?
- What is the difference between one management plan and one habitat or population?

DRAFT